

REMARKS

Applicants thank Examiner Ramana for noting allowance of claims 25-31, and indicating allowability of the subject matter of claims 15, 17, 18, and 34-40. Amendments to the claims are provided to place them in proper form for allowance.

Applicants would also thank Examiner Ramana for her time on the telephone in clarifying with the undersigned attorney her views of the claims and allowable subject matter. Applicants are accordingly amending allowable but objected-to claim 17 by making it independent. That amendment to claim 17 is not a narrowing amendment, since the language now explicit in that claim was implicit from its dependence on claim 13. While it is believed that claim 13 is allowable, as discussed in previous filings in this case, claim 13 is being canceled without prejudice to refiling in this or a continuing application.

Claims dependent from claim 13 have been amended as necessary to maintain proper dependence from an allowable independent claim. Thus, claims 14-16 and 18-21 now depend from allowable claim 17, and are therefore allowable at least on that basis. No admission concerning the allowability of claims 14-16 and 18-21 as they existed prior to this amendment is being made. Claims 34-40 have not been amended, as they depend from allowable claims.

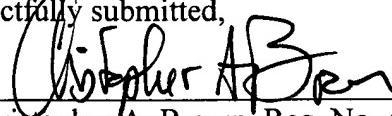
Claims 32 and 33 are dependent from claim 25, and are believed to be allowable on that basis. The pending Office Action alleges that subject matter in those claims is not supported by the specification, and in discussing this issue with Examiner Ramana the undersigned attorney did not agree with that position, at least because a “set” can include one or more members. Nevertheless, to accommodate the examiner’s objection to the term “set,” claims 32 and 33 have been amended to remove that term and to clearly define at least one screw that has a conical tapered head surface. This language is supported by the specification, and the examiner

indicated that it would overcome her objections. The same amendments have been made to claims 41-44, which also depend from allowable claims. These amendments do not narrow claims 32-33 and 41-44 for at least the reason noted above. Entry of the amendments to claims 32-33 and 41-44 is therefore respectfully requested, since it places these otherwise allowable claims into condition for allowance.

New claim 45, which is previous claim 15 rewritten in independent form, has been added. Thus, the language implicit in claim 15 from its dependence on claims 13 and 14 has been made explicit in claim 45. Dependent claims 46-52 have also been added, which correspond to previously pending claims that depended from prior claim 15. That is, claims 46-50 correspond to claims 34-38, and claims 51-52 correspond to claims 43-44. No new matter has been added.

Respectfully, Applicants do not concede any of the grounds set forth in the pending Office Action for rejecting the claims. The amendments to the claims made herein are thus not necessary to their patentability. Accordingly, these claims are entitled to the full scope of their language, including such scope as may be available under the doctrine of equivalents.

In summary, the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter these amendments and to issue a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims. The undersigned would welcome a call if it is determined that further information is needed to place this application in form for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,
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